

Message Text

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72

ACTION INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9163

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03763

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINR, VE, UK

SUBJECT: NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA: JOHN L.
TAYLOR

REF: CARACAS 2090

1. JOHN L. (JOCK) TAYLOR, CMG, PLANS TO TAKE UP HIS POST
AS NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA IN EARLY MAY.

2. TAYLOR IS AN EXTREMELY CAPABLE CAREER DIPLOMAT WHO
HAS WORKED CLOSELY AND WELL WITH EMBASSY LONDON AND DE-
PARTMENT OFFICIALS ON A WIDE RANGE OF PROBLEMS STEMMING
FROM ENERGY CRISIS. DURING TWO-YEAR TOUR JUST CONCLUDED,
HE HAS BEEN HEAD OF ENERGY DEPARTMENT, ASSISTANT UNDER
SECRETARY RESPONSIBLE FOR FCO'S ENERGY, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY AND MARINE DEPARTMENTS AND, WITHIN DEPARTMENT
OF ENERGY NEWLY ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY 1974, UNDER
SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AND EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS. FROM THIS RATHER UNIQUE VANTAGE POINT, TAYLOR
USED HIS MASTERY OF OIL AND WHITEHALL POLITICS TO PLAY
AN INCREASINGLY INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN SHAPING HMG'S
POLICIES RESPECTING OIL CONSUMER AND PRODUCER STATES.

3. DURING CRUCIAL DAYS OF OPEC EMBARGO AND OIL PRODUC-
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TION CUTBACKS IN LATE 1973, TAYLOR TOOK PRIVATELY SKEPTI-

CAL VIEW OF BRITAIN'S ATTEMPTS TO ASSURE ITSELF OF ADDITIONAL OIL SUPPLIES AS A NATION "FRIENDLY" TO ARAB PRODUCERS. HIS EMPHASIS WAS ON INCREASING TOTAL POOL OF OIL AVAILABLE TO EC MEMBER STATES THROUGH QUIET DIPLOMACY. AT SAME TIME HE TOOK REALISTIC, UNCONTENTIOUS VIEW TOWARD DIVERSION OF NON-EMBARGOED OIL BY INTERNATIONAL MAJORS.

4. DURING FOLLOW-UP TO WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE EVENTUALLY CULMINATING IN ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY, TAYLOR WAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTIVE OF MAIN THRUST OF US POLICY, EVEN WHEN IT ENCOUNTERED OCCASIONAL OPPOSITION FROM MORE SENIOR, DOMESTICALLY-ORIENTED CIVIL SERVANTS OR MINISTERIAL LEVEL OFFICIALS. TAYLOR HAS NOT HESITATED, HOWEVER, TO OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM WHEN HE HAS CONSIDERED US STRATEGY OR TACTICS TO BE MISGUIDED.

5. IN HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT, TAYLOR IS APT TO CONTINUE TO ESCHEW A STRICTLY BILATERAL APPROACH TO OIL-RELATED ISSUES AND CAN BE RELIED ON TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIS US COLLEAGUES IN ANALYZING AND RECOMMENDING REALISTIC COURSES OF ACTION IN CONTEXT OF OIL CONSUMER/PRODUCER RELATIONS. HE IS CAREFUL IN MAKING DEFINITIVE PRONOUNCEMENTS, BUT IF AND WHEN HE DOES, ONE CAN BE FAIRLY CONFIDENT THEY EITHER ARE OR WILL BECOME HMG POLICY.

6. BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FROM DIPLOMATIC SERVICE LIST FOLLOWS: HEAD OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND ENERGY DEPARTMENT, FCO SINCE DECEMBER 1972; BORN 3.8.24; ROYAL AIR FORCE 1944-47; FOREIGN OFFICE 1949; VICE-CONSUL LATER THIRD SECRETARY SAIGON 1950; SECOND SECRETARY BEIRUT 1952; PRAGUE 1955; FIRST SECRETARY FOREIGN OFFICE 1957; FIRST SECRETARY (COMMERCIAL) MONTEVIDEO 1960; DEPUTY HEAD OF CHANCERY BONN 1964; COUNSELLOR (COMMERCIAL) BONN 1967; MINISTER (COMMERCIAL) BUENOS AIRES 1969; ROYAL COLLEGE OF DEFENSE STUDIES 1972; M. 1952 MOLLY RUSHWORTH (5 S. 1954, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1960; 3 D. 1961, 1963, 1965)

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